

# War and Peace in Our Time: Mormon Perspectives

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church), commonly known as the Mormon Church, has a rich and complex history when it comes to war and peace. Throughout its history, the church has taken a variety of stances on these issues, reflecting the evolving views of its leaders and members.

## Early Mormon Pacifism

In the early days of the LDS Church, many of its leaders were pacifists. They believed that war was wrong and that Christians should not participate in it. This view was based on a number of factors, including the church's belief in the sanctity of life, its emphasis on peace and reconciliation, and its rejection of violence.



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by Morgan Deane

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One of the most prominent early Mormon pacifists was Joseph Smith, the founder of the church. Smith taught that "war is always unrighteous" and that "no man should be compelled to fight against his country or his brethren." He also counseled his followers to "seek peace and ensue it."

Other early Mormon leaders who advocated for pacifism included Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and John Taylor. Young, who led the church after Smith's death, taught that "war is the offspring of hell" and that "peace is the gift of heaven." Kimball declared that "war is a curse to any people" and that "peace is the greatest blessing that can be bestowed upon mankind." Taylor taught that "the only way to secure peace is to live in righteousness and to love our fellowmen."

## **Mormon Involvement in Wars**

Despite the pacifist views of its early leaders, the LDS Church has been involved in a number of wars. This includes the Mormon Battalion, which fought in the Mexican-American War, and the Utah War, which was fought between the church and the United States government.



In the Mexican-American War, the Mormon Battalion was a volunteer unit that fought on the side of the United States. The battalion was made up of over 500 Mormon men who were led by Brigham Young. The battalion marched over 2,000 miles from Iowa to California, and fought in a number of battles, including the Battle of Buena Vista.

The Utah War was a conflict between the LDS Church and the United States government. The war was fought over the issue of polygamy, which the government was trying to suppress. The church eventually agreed to end polygamy, and the war ended in 1858.

### **Current Mormon Stance on War and Peace**

Today, the LDS Church takes a more nuanced view of war and peace. The church still believes that war is wrong, but it also recognizes that there may be times when it is necessary to use violence to defend oneself or others. The church's current stance on war and peace is outlined in the following statement:



***“ "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believes that war is a tragedy and should be avoided whenever possible. However, we also recognize that there may be times when it is necessary to use violence to defend oneself or others. We believe that war should only be used as a last resort, and that it should be conducted with the utmost restraint and compassion." ”***

The LDS Church is also committed to promoting peace and reconciliation. The church has a long history of providing humanitarian aid to people in need, regardless of their religious or political beliefs. The church also supports a number of peace initiatives, including the United Nations and the World Council of Churches.

The LDS Church's views on war and peace have evolved over time, reflecting the changing circumstances of the world. However, the church's commitment to peace and reconciliation has remained constant. The church believes that war is a tragedy and that it should be avoided whenever possible. However, the church also recognizes that there may be times when it is necessary to use violence to defend oneself or others. The church's current stance on war and peace is one of nuance and

compassion, and it reflects the church's belief that peace is the ultimate goal.

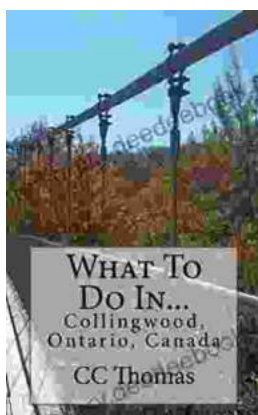


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